The Breaking of the Fast

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GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

Birla House, New Delhi, 15-1-'48

DEATH A DELIVERANCE

Gandhiji was too weak to walk to the prayer ground this evening. He however wanted to say a few words to the audience from his bed. The radio microphone was arranged near his bed, but as there was no loud-speaker, his voice could not reach the prayer audience. A Hindi translation of his dictated message was read after the prayers.

In his spoken message at the radio microphone Gandhiji expressed regret that his voice could not reach the prayer audience. However he would like to say a few words to the invisible audience sitting in their homes, as he knew that it would comfort them to hear his voice, although if he had known that his voice would not reach the prayer audience, he would not have spoken. He had dictated a message for the prayer gathering that day. He did not know whether he would be fit enough to do so the next day.

Gandhiji appealed to the people not to bother as to what the others were doing. Each one of them should turn the searchlight inwards and purify his or her heart as far as possible. He was convinced that if the people sufficiently purified themselves they would help India and help themselves and also shorten the period of his fast. None should be anxious for him. They should think out how best they could improve themselves and work for the good of the country. All must die some day. No one could escape death. Then why be afraid of it ? In fact death was a friend which brought deliverance from sufferings.

KILLING BY INCHES

In his dictated message Gandhiji said :

" Newspaper men sent me a message two hours after my prayer speech of last evening, asking to see me, as they had some doubts to be cleared. After a heavy day's work I felt disinclined out of some exhaustion to see them for discussion. I, therefore, told Shri Pyarelalji to inform them to excuse me and further tell them that they should put down the questions in writing and send them to me next morning. They did so. This is the first question :

' Why have you undertaken the fast when there was no disturbance of any kind in any part of the Indian Dominion ? '

" What was it if it was not a disturbing disturbance for a crowd to make an organized and a determined effort to take forcible possession of Muslim houses ? The disturbance was such that the Police had reluctantly to resort to tear gas and even to a little shooting if only overhead, before the crowd dispersed. It would have been foolish for me to wait till the last Muslim had been turned out of Delhi by subtle undemonstrative methods, which I would describe as killing by inches."

THE SARDAR

" The second question is :

' You have stated that you could not give any reply to the Muslims who came to you with their tale of fear and insecurity and who have complained that Sardar Patel, who is in charge of Home Affairs, is anti-Muslim. You have also stated that Sardar Patel is no longer a " yes-man " as he used to be. These factors create the impression that the fast is more intended to bring about a change of heart in the Sardar and thereby amounts to a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. It would be helpful if you can clear the position.'

" As to this I feel that my reply was precise, not admitting of more interpretations than one. The suggested interpretation never crossed my mind. If I had known that my statement could bear any such interpretation, I should have dispelled the doubt in anticipation. Many Muslim friends had complained of the Sardar's so-called anti-Muslim attitude. I had, with a degree of suppressed pain, listened to them without giving any explanation. The fast freed me from this self-imposed restraint and I was able to assure the critics that they were wrong in isolating him from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me, whom they gratuitously raise to the sky. This isolation did them no good. The Sardar had a bluntness of speech which sometimes unintentionally hurt, though his heart was expansive enough to accommodate all. Thus my statement was meant deliberately to free a life-long and faithful comrade from any unworthy reproach. Lest my hearers should go away with the idea that my compliment carried the meaning that I could treat the Sardar as my ' yes-man ' as he was affectionately described, I balanced the compliment by adding the proviso that he was too masterful to be anybody's ' yes-man '. When he was my 'yes-man', he permitted himself to be so named because whatever I said instinctively appealed to him. Great as he was in his own field and a very able administrator, he was humble enough to begin his political education under me because as he explained to me he could not take to the politics in vogue at the time I began my public career in India. When power descended on him, he saw that he could no longer successfully apply the method of non-violence which he used to wield with signal success. I have made the discovery that what I and the people with me had termed non-violence was not the genuine article but a weak copy known as passive resistance. Naturally, passive resistance can

avail nothing to a ruler. Imagine a weak ruler being able to represent any people. He would only degrade his masters who, for the time being, had placed themselves under his trust. I know that the Sardar could never betray or degrade his trust.

Object of the Fast

"I wonder if with a knowledge of this background to my statement, anybody would dare call my fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. If there is any such person, I can only tell him that he would degrade and hurt himself, never the Sardar or me. Have I not before now said emphatically that no outside power can really degrade a man? He only can degrade himself. Though I know that this sentence is irrelevant here, it is such a truth that it bears repetition on all occasions. My fast, as I have stated in plain language, is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Union, and therefore it is necessarily against the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Union and the Muslims of Pakistan. It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan as in the case of the Muslim minority in the Union. This is a clumsy compression of the idea I have already explained. I cannot expect the fast taken by a very imperfect and weak mortal, as I truly confess I am, to have the potency to make its proteges proof against all danger. The fast is a process of self-purification for all. It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step."

No Room for Distortion

"The third question is:

'Your fast has been undertaken on the eve of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council and soon after the Karachi riots and the Gujarat massacre. What publicity the latter incidents received in the foreign Press is not known. But undoubtedly, your fast has overshadowed all other incidents. And Pakistan representatives would not be worth their reputation if they do not seize the opportunity to declare that the Mahatma has undertaken the fast to bring sanity among his Hindu followers, who have been making the life of the Muslims in India impossible. Truth takes a long time to reach the four corners of the globe. But in the meantime your fast may have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing our case in the eyes of the United Nations.'

"This question does not demand or need any elaborate answer. From all I have known of the powers and peoples outside India, I make bold to say that the fast has created only a healthy impression. Outsiders who are able to take an impartial and unbiassed view of what is happening in India cannot distort the purpose of the fast, which is meant to bring sanity to all those who inhabit both the Union and Pakistan. It is impossible to save the Muslims in the Union if the Muslim majority in Pakistan do not behave as decent men and women. Happily for the cause, the Muslims of Pakistan, as Shrimati Mridulabehn's enquiry of yesterday made clear, have become wide awake to a sense of their duty. The United Nations know that my fast aids them to come to a right decision and to give the right guidance to the newly made two Dominions."

Birla House, New Delhi, 16-1-'48

Grace of God

Before Gandhiji's dictated message was read out to the prayer audience, he addressed them on the microphone from his bed. He said that he had not expected that he would be able to speak to them that day but they would be pleased to learn that if anything, his voice was less feeble that day than the day before. He could not explain it except for the grace of God. He had never felt so well on the fourth day of the fast in the past. If all of them continued to participate in the process of self-purification, he would probably have the strength to speak to them till the end. He was in no hurry to break the fast. Hurry would spoil matters. He did not want anyone to come and tell him that things had been set right while the process was incomplete. If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, it would have its repercussions all over the country. He had no wish to live unless peace reigned in the two Dominions.

Unmixed Goodwill

In his message to the prayer gathering Gandhiji said:

"It is never a light matter for any responsible Cabinet to alter a deliberate settled policy. Yet our Cabinet, responsible in every sense of the term, has with equal deliberation yet promptness unsettled their settled fact. They deserve the warmest thanks from the whole country, from Kashmir to Cape Camorin and from Karachi to the Assam frontier. And I know that all the nations of the earth will proclaim this gesture as one which only a large-hearted Cabinet like ours could rise to. This is no policy of appeasement of the Muslims. This is a policy, if you like, of self-appeasement. No Cabinet worthy of being reprsentative of a large mass of mankind can afford to take any step merely because it is likely to win the hasty applause of an unthinknig public. In the midst of insanity, should not our best representatives retain sanity and bravely prevent a wreck of the ship of State under their management? What then was the actuating motive? It was my fast. It changed the whole outlook. Without the fast they could not go beyond what the law permitted and required them to do. But the present gesture on the part of the Government of India is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement not only of the Kashmir question, but of all the differences between the two Dominions. Friendship should replace the present enmity. Demands of equity supersede the letter of law. There is a homely maxim of law which has been in practice for centuries in England that when common law seems to fail, equity comes to the rescue. Not long ago there were even separate courts for the administration of law and of equity. Considered in this setting, there is no room for questioning the utter justice of this act of the Union Government. If we want a precedent, there is a striking one at our disposal in the form of what is popularly known as the MacDonald Award. That Award was really the unanimous judgment of not only the members of the British Cabinet, but also of the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. It was undone overnight as a result of the fast undertaken in Yeravda prison.

Fittest Answers to Fast

"I have been asked to end the fast because of this great act of the Union Government. I wish I could persuade myself to do so. I know that the medical friends who, of their own volition and at considerable

sacrifice, meticulously examine me from day to day are getting more and more anxious as the fast is prolonged. Because of defective kidney function they dread not so much my instantaneous collapse as permanent after-effects of any further prolongation. I did not embark upon the fast after consultation with medical men, be they however able. My sole guide, even dictator, was God, the Infallible and Omnipotent. If He has any further use for this frail body of mine, He will keep it in spite of the prognostications of medical men and women. I am in His hands. Therefore, I hope you will believe me when I say that I dread neither death nor permanent injury, even if I survive. But I do feel that this warning of medical friends should, if the country has any use for me, hurry the people up to close their ranks. And like brave men and women, that we ought to be under hard-earned freedom, we should trust even those whom we may suspect as our enemies. Brave people disdain distrust. The letter of my vow will be satisfied if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all the other parts of India or Pakistan will be strong enough to break. Happily, the people in both the Dominions seem to have instinctively realized that the fittest answer to the fast should be a complete friendship between the two Dominions, such that members of all communities should be able to go to either Dominion without the slightest fear of molestation. Self-purification demands nothing less. It will be wrong for the rest of the two Dominions to put a heavy strain upon Delhi. After all, the inhabitants of the Union are not superhuman. In the name of the people, our Government have taken a liberal step without counting the cost. What will be Pakistan's counter gesture? The ways are many if there is the will. Is it there?"

Birla House, New Delhi, 17-1-'48

Cleansing of Hearts

"I repeat what I have said before — nothing is to be done under pressure of the fast. I have observed before that things done under pressure of a fast have been undone after the fast is over. If any such thing happens, it would be a tragedy of the highest degree. There is no occasion for it at any time. What a spiritual fast does expect is cleansing of the heart. The cleansing, if it is honest, does not cease to be when the cause which induced it ceases. The cleansing of a wall seen in the form of a whitewash does not cease when the dear one has come and gone. This material cleansing is bound to require renovation after some time. Cleansing of the heart once achieved only dies with one's death. Apart from this legitimate and laudable pressure, the fast has no other function which can be described as proper.

A Word to Pakistan

"The number of telegrams coming from Rajas, Maharajas and the laity continues to increase. There are telegrams from Pakistan too. They are good so far as they go. But as a friend and well-wisher I must say to all those who reside in Pakistan and mould its fortune that they will fail to make Pakistan permanent if their conscience is not quickened and if they do not admit the wrongs for which Pakistan is responsible.

"This does not mean that I do not wish a voluntary re-union, but I wish to remove and resist the idea that Pakistan should be re-united by force of arms. I hope that this will not be misunderstood as a note of discord, whilst I am lying on what is truly a deathbed. I hope all Pakistanis will realize that I would be untrue to them and to myself if, out of weakness and for fear of hurting their feelings, I failed to convey to them what I truthfully feel. If I am wrong in my estimate, I should be so told and if I am convinced, I promise that I shall retract what I have said here. So far as I know, the point is not open to question.

Happy in Fasting

"My fast should not be considered a political move in any sense of the term. It is in obedience to the peremptory call of conscience and duty. It comes out of felt agony. I call to witness all my numerous Muslim friends in Delhi. Their representatives meet me almost everyday to report the day's events. Neither the Rajas and Maharajas nor the Hindus and Sikhs or any others would serve themselves or India as a whole, if at this, what is to me a sacred juncture, they mislead me with a view to terminating my fast. Let them know that I feel never so happy as when I am fasting for the spirit. This fast has brought me higher happiness than hitherto. No one need disturb this happy state, unless he can honestly claim that in his journey he has turned deliberately from Satan towards God."

Birla House, New Delhi, 18-1-'48

The Task Ahead

Speaking on the microphone from his bed at 5-20 p. m. on Sunday, Gandhiji said that he had earlier dictated a message for the prayer audience which would be read out to them.

It was a happy day for him and for all of them. He was glad that due to their kindness he could break his fast on the auspicious day of Guru Govind Singh's birthday anniversary. He could never forget the kindness which was daily being showered on him by the inhabitants of Delhi, the Pakistan sufferers and the Government and administrative authorities, since the fast began. He had experienced the same love at Calcutta. He could not forget the help that he had received from Shaheedsaheb in restoring peace in Calcutta. But for him, he (Gandhiji) would not have stopped in Calcutta. People had many suspicions about Shaheedsaheb's bonafides still. They should forget the past and learn the duty of having friendly feelings towards all and being inimical to none. The crores of Muslims were not all angels nor were all the Hindus and the Sikhs. There were good and bad specimens among all communities. Would they be less than friendly towards the so-called criminal tribes amongst them?

Muslims were a numerous community scattered all over the world. There was no reason why they, who stood for friendship with the whole world, should not be friends with the Muslims. He was not a fortune-teller, but God had given him intellect and understanding enough to know that if for some reason or other they could not be friends with the Muslims of the

(Continued on p. 534)

HARIJAN

January 25 1948

THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

The feverish anxiety into which the whole city of Delhi and the country at large had been plunged was terminated when Gandhiji broke his fast at Birla House, New Delhi, today at 12-45 p. m. with due solemnity. Earlier in the day, representatives of all the important groups and organizations in the city, including representatives of the refugees and from the three worst affected parts of the city, namely, Karol Bagh, Sabzi Mandi and Paharganj, had assembled under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the latter's residence and put their signatures to a seven-point declaration covering the conditions laid down by Gandhiji for breaking his fast. The document was recorded in both the Persian and Devanagari scripts at Gandhiji's special insistence. At the meeting were also present Maulana Azadsaheb and Major General Shah Nawazkhan. Delhi Muslims were represented by Maulanas Hifzur Rahman and Ahmed Saeed of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Maulana Habib-ur-Rahman. Goswami Shri Ganesh Datt, Shri Basantlal and Shri Narain Das represented the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. There were too the representatives of the various Sikh organizations. They then all repaired (numbering over 100) to Birla House, where they assembled in Gandhiji's room, to request him to break the fast. Maulanasaheb and Pandit Jawaharlalji had arrived there already and Janab Zahid Hussainsaheb, the Pakistan's High Commissioner, came in a little later.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad opened the proceedings by narrating to Gandhiji how they had all assembled on the previous night at the former's residence and after full discussion decided to sign the declaration then and there. But as representatives of some organizations were not present in that meeting, they felt that they should not go to Gandhiji immediately with the signed document but wait till the remaining signatures were obtained. They had accordingly met again in the morning when all those who were absent during the previous night's meeting came and gave their signatures. It was found in the course of the morning meeting, Dr. Rajendra Prasad reported, that even those who had some lingering doubts on the previous night were now confident that they could ask Gandhiji with a full sense of their responsibility to break the fast. As the President of the Congress, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said that he had signed the document in view of the guarantee which they had all jointly and severally given. Janab Khurshid, the Chief Commissioner, and Shri Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, who were present, had signed the document on behalf of the administration. It had been decided to set up a number of committees to implement the pledge. Dr. Rajendra Prasad hoped that Gandhiji would now terminate his fast.

Shri Deshabandhu Gupta, speaking next, described some touching scenes of fraternization between the Hindus and Muslims which he had witnessed when a procession of about 150 Muslims was taken out that morning in Subzi Mandi and was received with ovation and offered fruit and refreshments by the Hindu inhabitants of that locality.

Gandhiji replying said that what they had told him had touched him deeply. They had given him all that he had asked for. But if their words meant that they held themselves responsible for communal peace in Delhi only and what happened in other places was no concern of theirs, then their guarantee was nothing worth and he would feel and they too would one day realize that it was a great blunder on his part to have given up his fast. As an illustration he referred to the report of the happenings in Allahabad that had appeared in the Press. Representatives of both the R. S. S. and the Hindu Mahasabha were among the signatories to the seven-point declaration. If they were sincere in their professions, surely, they could not be indifferent to outbreaks of madness in places other than Delhi. It would be a fraud upon God if they did so. Delhi was the heart of the Indian Dominion and they (the representatives gathered there) were the cream of Delhi. If they could not make the whole of India realize that the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were all brothers, it would bode ill for the future of both the Dominions. What would happen to Hindustan if they quarrelled with one another ?

Here Gandhiji broke down owing to overwhelming feeling as he explained on resumption. What he had said was repeated aloud by me and partly by Dr. Sushila Nayyar.

Resuming his remarks after the interval, Gandhiji again appealed to them to search well their hearts so that they might not take any step which they would have to regret afterwards. The occasion demanded of them bravery of the highest order. They should clearly realize the implications of their pledge. It was nothing less than that what they had achieved in Delhi had to be realized in the whole of India. That did not mean that the ideal could be realized in a day. But it did mean that whilst in the past they had turned their face towards Satan, they had now resolved to turn it Godward. If, in their hearts, they did not accept what he had placed before them or if they had made up their minds that it was beyond them, they should plainly tell him so.

There could be nothing more wrong on their part, continued Gandhiji, than to hold that Hindustan belonged only to the Hindus and the Muslims could have no place in it or on the reverse that Pakistan belonged to the Muslims only and the Hindus and Sikhs could have no place in it. He wanted the refugees to understand that if they set things right in Delhi, as he had suggested, that was the only way to set things right in Pakistan too. He reminded them

that he was not a man to shirk another fast, should he afterwards discover that he had been deceived or had deceived himself into breaking it prematurely. They should, therefore, act with circumspection and cent per cent sincerity. He invited the representatives of Mussalmans who had been meeting him frequently to tell him whether they were satisfied that the conditions in Delhi were now such as to warrant breaking the fast on his part.

Addressing next a few words to the Muslims especially, he asked if there was any ground for the suspicion that the Muslims did not regard India as their country. They lived in it in the midst of the Hindus because they could not help it, but one day they had to part company. He hoped that that suspicion was baseless. Similarly, if there was a Hindu who regarded the Muslims as *yavanas* or *asuras* incapable of realizing God, he was guilty of the worst blasphemy, which could possibly have no room in the covenant which they had signed.

He then referred to a book which a Muslim friend had lovingly presented him at Patna. In that book the writer had propounded that according to the *Quran*, *kafirs* (i. e. Hindus) were worse than poisonous reptiles and fit only to be exterminated. Not only was there no sin in using every conceivable variety of force or fraud to compass that end, it was meritorious in the eyes of God. He was sure that no God-fearing Muslims could subscribe to or even secretly sympathize with that creed. Some dubbed Hindus as image worshippers, proceeded Gandhiji. But it was not the stone image which they worshipped but the God within, without Whom not a particle of matter existed. If a devotee saw God in an image, it was not a thing for anyone to cavil at. Granting that his belief was a delusion, it deluded nobody but himself. It required magnanimity and breadth of outlook to understand and appreciate the religious convictions and practices of others. It was the same thing if they considered the *Quran* or the *Granth Saheb* as God.

Concluding, Gandhiji remarked that if they fully accepted the implications of their pledge, they should release him from Delhi so that he might be free to go to Pakistan. In his absence they should welcome such refugees from Pakistan as might want to return to their homes. The latter were none too happy over there just as the Hindus in the Indian Dominion were none too happy to lose large numbers of Muslim artisans and craftsmen. It was not easy to reproduce in a day traditional skill that had been acquired through generations. It was a loss on both sides which no sane people would like willingly to perpetuate.

Gandhiji ended by once more asking them to turn the searchlight inward and not to deceive themselves or others by asking him to give up his fast, if what he had said did not find a responsive echo in their hearts.

Maulanasaheb Abul Kalam Azad, being next asked to say something, remarked that so far as the guarantee of communal peace was concerned it could be given only by the representatives of the citizens of Delhi. He, however, did not want to leave unchallenged the Muslim friends' observation to which Gandhiji had referred, as it referred to the teachings of Islam. He had no hesitation in characterizing it as a libel on Islam. He quoted a verse from the *Quran* which was to the effect that all mankind are brethren, irrespective of their race or religion. The remarks to which Gandhiji had referred were abhorrent to the teachings of Islam. They were only indicative of the insanity that had of late, seized some sections of the people.

He was followed by Maulana Hifzur-Rahman-saheb, who categorically repudiated the allegation that his co-religionists did not regard India as their country which claimed their full and undivided allegiance, but only as a place where they were forced to live by expediency and by the compulsion of circumstances. Their thirty years' unbroken record of service of the nationalist cause gave the lie to that charge. They regarded it as an insult to their nationalism to be asked to reiterate their loyalty to India. He recalled how during the recent disturbances at one stage their Congress friends and colleagues had offered to provide a safe asylum to them outside Delhi as they were not sure that they would be able to give them adequate protection in Delhi. But they had declined that offer and had preferred to stay in and go about the city without any police escort, trusting to God alone. Speaking of the Jamiat, he could say that its members were staunch followers of Maulana Azadsaheb and the Congress. Those who had left for Pakistan had done so out of fear for their lives and worse. They all wanted to remain in India as citizens of India with self-respect and honour, in their own right, not on the mercy or sufferance of anybody. He asserted that if India were to be attacked they would all defend it to the last man as their country. They had plainly said on more than one occasion that those who were not prepared to do so should leave India and go to Pakistan.

Describing next the change that had come over the city as a result of Gandhiji's fast, he said that they regarded it as a happy augury and a presage of things to come. They were satisfied that the tide had definitely turned and was now fast flowing in the direction of communal harmony and peace when previously bitterness and hatred ran riot. Now that the administration had underwritten the assurance given by the representatives of the people, they were satisfied that they would be implemented, though it might take some time. He, therefore, joined Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his appeal that Gandhiji should break the fast.

After Shri Ganesh Datt had on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S reiterated that appeal Janab Zahid Hussainsaheb addressed a few words to Gandhiji. He was there, he said, to convey to Gandhiji how deeply concerned the people in Pakistan were about him and how they were daily inundating him with anxious inquiries about his (Gandhiji's) health. It was their heart's desire that

circumstances might soon prevail which would enable him to break the fast. If there was anything that he could fittingly do towards that end he was ready and so were the people of Pakistan.

Janab Zahid Hussainsaheb was followed by Janab Khurshid and Shri Randhawa who on behalf of the administration reiterated the assurance that all the conditions mentioned in the citizens' pledge would be duly implemented, and no effort would be spared to restore to the Indian capital its glorious old tradition of communal harmony and peace.

Sardar Harbans Singh endorsed on behalf of the Sikhs what his predecessors had said. Gandhiji then expressed his readiness to break the fast, which was done with the usual ceremony of prayer at which texts from the Japanese, Muslim and Parsi scriptures were recited followed by the *mantra*:

"Lead me from untruth to truth,
From darkness to light,
From death to immortality."

A Hindustani hymn and the Christian hymn: "When I survey the wondrous cross", were then sung by the girl inmates of the *ashram* followed by *Ramadhun*. The glass of fruit juice was handed by Maulanasaheb and Gandhiji broke the fast after fruit was distributed to and partaken by all present.

New Delhi, 18-1-'48 PYARELAL

An important Recommendation

The Village Oil Industry and Crushing Sub-Committee of the Oil Seeds Committee of the Government of India which met recently at Nagpur under the chairmanship of Sir Datar Singh has suggested that the mills should make use of non-edible oils for making soap so as to release land for food purposes.

It may be noted that in Berar alone there are about five lakhs of neem trees on the roadsides, the seeds from which can be crushed and made to yield about three lakhs tins of oil and about three lakhs of maunds of oilcake which will become useful as manure. This indicates the enormous possibilities in this line.

We would suggest that in addition to soap making if these non-edible oils are decolourized and deodourized, various commercial uses such as the supply of hair-oils, etc. can be undertaken. Here is a line of work which will give an acceptable alternative to the oil-mills which are today producing *nakli ghee* or *vanaspati*.

J. C. K.

NOTICE

Files of Volume X of the three Harijan weeklies —the *Harijan* (English), the *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati) and the *Harijansevak* (Hindustani) of the year beginning with 10-2-'46, and ending with 26-1-'47, bound in cardboard cover and *khadi* back are available at this office.

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MANAGER

GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

(Continued from p. 531)

Union, the Muslims of the whole world would be antagonized and they would lose India. Then India including both the Dominions, would once again pass under foreign domination.

He had received the good wishes and blessings of numberless men and women. He had been assured that the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Jews, Christians and others who lived in Delhi would all live together as brothers. They would never quarrel among themselves again and in this assurance sufferers from Pakistan had also joined. This was no small matter. If the auspicious beginning was continued, it was bound to ensure peace in India and thence in Pakistan. This was not one man's work, but all, young and old, men and women, had to co-operate sincerely in the effort. If this was not the meaning of the breaking of his fast, he had not done well in breaking it. Then they would have fulfilled the letter and killed the spirit. What was possible in Delhi was possible in the rest of the Union and if communal peace reigned in the whole of the Union, Pakistan was bound to follow suit. They should shed all fear. Every Muslim child should feel safe among the Hindus and Sikhs. Up till now our face was turned towards Satan, now he hoped it would be turned Godward. If they did so, the Union would lead the way to world peace. He did not wish to live for any other purpose. Mere lip service was no good. They must install God in their hearts. God was one, whatever the name given to Him. The realization of this truth should end all enmity and intolerance.

Let the Hindus decide once for all that they would not quarrel. He would advise the Hindus and the Sikhs to read the *Quran* as they read the *Gita* and the *Granth Saheb*. To the Muslims he would say that they should read the *Gita* and the *Granth Saheb* with the same reverence with which they read the *Quran*. They should understand the meaning of what they read and have equal regard for all religions. This was his life-long practice and ideal. He claimed to be a *sanatani* Hindu, though he was not an idolater in the accepted sense. But he could not despise those who worshipped idols. The idol worshipper saw God in the stone image. God was omnipresent. If it was wrong to seek God in a stone how was it right to seek Him in a book called the *Gita*, the *Granth Saheb* or the *Quran*? Was not that also idol worship? By cultivating tolerance and respect they would be able to learn from all. Then they would forget the communal differences and live together in peace and amity. The disgraceful incidents where men and women were thrown out of moving trains, would then cease to occur. People would freely and fearlessly move about in the Union. He would never be at peace with himself till Pakistan was just as safe for the Hindus and Sikhs and the Pakistan sufferers could return to their homes with honour and dignity, and the Muslims to theirs in the Union.

BREAKING OF THE FAST

In his written message Gandhiji said:

"I embarked on the fast in the name of Truth whose familiar name is God. Without living Truth God is nowhere. In the name of God we have indulged

in lies, massacres of people without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions, forcible conversions and we have done all this shamelessly. I am not aware if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With that same name on my lips I have broken the fast. The agony of our people was unbearable. Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendrababu brought over hundred people representing the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and representatives of refugees from the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. In this very representative company were present Zahid Hussainsaheb, the High Commissioner for Pakistan, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the Deputy Commissioner, General Shah Nawazkhan, representing the Azad Hind Fouj (I. N. A.). Pandit Nehru, sitting like a statue, was of course there, as also Maulanasaheb. Dr. Rajendra Babu read a document in Hindustani signed by these representatives, asking me not to put any further strain on them and end the agony by breaking the fast. Telegrams after telegrams have come from Pakistan and the Indian Union urging me to do the same. I could not resist the counsel of all these friends. I could not disbelieve their pledge: that come what may, there would be complete friendship between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews, a friendship not to be broken. To break that friendship would be to break the nation.

Spirit of the Vow

"As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service of humanity that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you that it will revive with redoubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life doing service of humanity till the last moment. That span according to learned opinion is at least one hundred twentyfive years, some say one hundred thirtythree. The letter of my vow has been fulfilled early beyond expectation, through the great goodwill of all the citizens of Delhi, including the Hindu Mahasabha leaders and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh. The result could not be otherwise when I find that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting since yesterday. Signed assurances of heart friendship have been pouring in upon me from thousands. Telegraphic blessings have come from all over the world. Can there be a better sign of God's hand in this act of mine? But beyond the letter of fulfilment of my solemn vow lies its spirit without which the letter killeth. The spirit of the vow is sincere friendship between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Union and a similar friendship in Pakistan. If the first is assured, the second must follow, as sure as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it would be folly to expect light in Pakistan. But if the night in the Union is dispelled beyond the shadow of a doubt, it cannot be otherwise in Pakistan, nor are signs wanting in that direction. Numerous messages have come from Pakistan, not one of dissent. May God, who is Truth, guide us as He has visibly guided us during all these six days."

Birla House, New Delhi, 19-1-'48

Congratulations and Concern

"My thanks go out to the senders of numerous wires from all over the world from Indians and non-Indians expressing their goodwill and anxiety. These show the correctness of the step I had taken. Not that I had the slightest doubt about it. I had none about this as I never have had about the reality that God Is and that His most graphic name is Truth. Now has begun a stream of wires of congratulations heaving relief. These friends will forgive me for not sending personal acknowledgments. It is physically impossible to do so. I hope too that no such acknowledgment is expected by the senders. I feel constrained to single out two — one from the Premier of the West Punjab and the other from the Nawabsaheb of Bhopal. They are today labouring under grave distrust. Let the extracted passages speak for themselves. If the senders were not sincere, they would have spared themselves and me on the solemn occasion that the fast was.

Here is from the Nawabsaheb of Bhopal:

> "Your appeal for a reunion of hearts of all communities cannot fail to find support from all people of goodwill in both Dominions as will also any appeal for an understanding and friendly relations between India and Pakistan. We in Bhopal have been able happily to face our troubles during the past year in a spirit of concord, amity and goodwill between all communities with the result that not a single untoward incident has occurred to mar the peace of the State. We assure you that we shall strive to further this friendly spirit with all our strength at our command."

I give the full text of the wire from the Premier of the West Punjab:

> "The West Punjab Ministry expresses deep admiration and sincere appreciation for your great gesture for the furtherance of a noble cause. This Ministry has always stood for the principle of doing everything possible to protect the lives, honour and property of the minorities, and giving them equal rights of citizenship. We assure you that this Ministry will follow this policy with redoubled vigour. We are anxious to see an immediate improvement in the situation throughout the Indian sub-continent which may enable you to break your fast. No efforts will be spared in this province to help in saving a life as precious as yours."

A Warning

"In this age of senseless imitation my warning is that it would be foolish for anybody to embark on such a fast expecting identical results in an identically short space of time. If anyone does, he will face severe disappointment and will discredit what is a hoary and infallible institution. Two severe qualifications are necessary — a living faith in God and a felt peremptory call from Him. I am tempted to add a third, but it is superfluous. A peremptory call from God within presupposes the rightness, timeliness and propriety of the cause for which the fast is taken. It follows that a long previous preparation is required. Let no one, therefore, lightly embark on such a fast.

Task before Them

"The citizens of Delhi and the refugees have a heavy task in front of them. Let them seek occasions for meeting together as often as possible in perfect mutual trust. It was a soul stirring sight for me to meet Muslim sisters in large numbers yesterday. Girls in my

party told me that the sisters were sitting in Birla House uncertain whether they could come to me. They were in purdah, most of them. I asked them to be brought in and they came. I suggested that they would not have the purdah before their fathers or brothers. Why should they think me less ? And off went the purdah without exception. This is not the first time that the purdah has disappeared before me. I mention the incident to illustrate what genuine love, as I claim mine to be, is able to do. Hindu and Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports. Not only should there be no boycott of Muslims but they should be induced to resume their previous occupations. Delhi is poorer for the disappearance of the exquisite workmanship of the Muslims. It is a miserable and miserly thing for the Hindus and the Sikhs to wish to take away from them their means of livelihood. On the one hand there should be no monopoly and on the other there should be no attempt at deprivation. In this great country of ours there is room for all. The Peace Committees that have been formed must not go to sleep as many committees unfortunately do in all countries. The condition of keeping me in your midst is that all the communities in India live at peace with one another, not by force of arms but that of love than which there is no better cement to be found in the world."

DANGER SIGNALS

I have read your correspondent's strictures on my article on the *takli*.

In the famous Whistler-Ruskin controversy, the counsel for Ruskin remarked that surely Mr. Ruskin knew. He had spent his lifetime among pictures. Whistler retorted that by that standard the sentinel in the Art Gallery must be the finest critic. The fact, therefore, that even "a spinner of long standing" should have the "shock of my (his) life" at the 'arrogant' attributions to the *takli*, is no argument against what I have written. It is, however, significant. It betrays the contempt, based on prejudice and ignorance, with which crafts are regarded. And to regard crafts only as a means of putting a few coppers in the hands of the poor, having perhaps also some moral values, grudgingly assumed, appears to me as nothing less than contempt for them. As such the crafts could not be what Gandhiji would have us believe, the dynamic centres of a non-violent social order. The problem before Gandhiji was how to so utilize the common, inescapable life of the masses as to make a dynamic nation which would not only overthrow the mightiest imperialist power, but also show to the war-weary world a way of justice, peace and happiness — the way to *Rama Rajya*, as he would put it. His answer was *Nayee Talim*. *Nayee Talim* teaches us so to live the 'inescapable life' as to discover it and to discover ourselves in the process. The way to live thus is to turn the eye of wonder, investigation and discovery on things we cannot escape from. Clothes we all must have. If we produce them ourselves, and keep a scientist's eye open while we produce them, we not only clothe ourselves more effectively, 'the why and wherefore' of things also leads us into the haloed realms of knowledge. And this also more effectively. Current education, which calls for intellectual exercise only in the study room or the laboratory, is not so effective as this constant watch on the "little common things of life" in creating that spirit of observation and inquiry which leads to discovery, invention and progress. The usual sleepiness and unawareness of everyday life of the scholar is proverbial.

The correspondent seems to be a man of education so-called. He has been plying the *takli* for a long time and yet, obviously, he has never asked himself: Why the *takli* rotates? Why does it fall? Why is the disc circular? Why is the rod circular? What is the radius of the disc? What is the diameter of the rod? and a host of simple questions which are bound to arise in any mind with even a grain of curiosity. The answers to them would have brought in all those things, which the correspondent calls 'sentimental nonsense' so naturally that they would not have taken away his breath except for wonder: how much knowledge lay before him just to be noticed! Wordsworth's lines:

> "To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

show the deep penetration of a mind which had drunk deep at the fount of life. Most minds trained in contact with life develop something of this penetration. Knowledge has been derived from life and yet would imply that life directly observed could not give knowledge. *Takli* is a solid. Why should it take anybody's breath away if someone says that it has the geometry of solids, their physical and chemical properties? It rotates. Why should it be 'shocking' to hear that it obeys the laws of motion? It is a means of producing cloth which consumes, perhaps, a fair part of the income of the toiling millions who constitute the sub-continent of India. It is most natural that any mind worth the name should enter the sacred realm of economics in connection with this simple instrument.

The violent reaction of the correspondent to the most obvious fact of Basic Education should be regarded as a danger signal by the leaders of the experiment. It shows the colossal ignorance which prevails about the richest gift *Nayee Talim* has given the country. Books containing instructions in the manner suggested in my article in question should be written out in full. Things will have to be made fool proof, it seems, before we can carry the country with us.

New Delhi, 9-1-'48 DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

CONTENTS

		PAGE
GANDHIJI'S POST-PRAYER SPEECHES		529
THE BREAKING OF THE FAST	... PYARELAL	532
DANGER SIGNALS	... DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR	536
NOTE :		
AN IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATION	... J. C. K.	534

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-138